

EXTRAORDINARY FIRM ADMINISTRATOR

BEING THE BEST OF THE BEST

1. Make the “Firm” your #1 client.
 - Focus on serving the firm well. Everything you do and every decision you make, should be in the best interest of the firm.
 - Doing what is best for the firm requires strength and the ability to say “no”.
2. Be a strong communicator.
 - Listen well and be a sounding board.
 - Be an active listener and learn to read body language.
 - Write and present well. Always know your objective.
3. Network.
 - Stay well-connected. Suggest speakers, consultants and events. Know what is going on in your field and share information with the partners.
4. Educate yourself continuously.
 - This business is always changing. Stay informed by attending conferences, association meetings and classes.
 - Carve out time every day to read (read as much as you can).
5. Keep balance.
 - Set an example for others on how to keep balance between work, family and health.
 - Work is never done and there will always be a “to do” list, so carve out time to unwind.
 - With balance you will ultimately be happier, better able to handle stress and be more positive.
6. Develop your image.
 - Behavior: Where you spend your time will communicate your strongest message regarding your image. Consider your priorities and determine the greatest value you can provide for the firm.
 - Appearance: Both your body language and attire will say a lot about who you are as a professional.
 - Environment: What does your workspace say about you? Have you embraced technology?
7. Build your team.
 - Learn to recognize talent and hire strong people.
 - Train, motivate and inspire your team.
 - Learn to delegate to your team and overcome your fear of losing control.
 - In order to be extraordinary, you need to develop an extraordinary team.
8. Be decisive.
 - Determine the significance of the decision.
 - Gather information; be well informed and anticipate the concerns of others.
 - Be prepared to outline your well-reasoned basis for your decision.
 - Identify key influencers and get their support for the decision.
 - Over-communicate.
 - If you make a wrong decision, admit it, learn from it and move on.

9. Stay positive.
 - This is easier said than done. We work in the trenches and they are full of setbacks, complaints and problems. Stay disciplined and be deliberate about staying positive.
 - Be the person who helps lift the partners up; be the person who assures the partners that everything will work out.
 - Let your personal passion ignite others and inspire them.
10. Be indispensable.
 - Think big picture; don't get lost in the routine tasks.
 - Be a champion for initiatives, projects and big ideas; be counted on for implementation.
 - Work to improve the bottom-line, enhance efficiency or influence culture.
 - Develop expertise.
11. Be flexible.
 - Be willing to let go of daily plans/priorities in order to address an immediate issue.
 - Be strategic and hands-on. Move effortlessly between the different levels.
12. Pick your battles.
 - Know when to take a stand and when to compromise.
 - Focus on the issue, not the person.
 - Find common ground.
 - Seek to understand first.
 - Don't retaliate.
 - Avoid playing favorites; be respectful of everyone.
13. Be reliable and responsive.
 - Be the person who can be counted on.
 - Follow up on items, send out reminders and be responsive to emails.
 - Come prepared to meetings and never bring a blank piece of paper.
14. Manage your time.
 - Don't be a busy fly buzzing around the office annoying people and getting little done.
 - Make a plan, know your priorities and set out your own strategy.
 - Learn to say no without saying no.
 - Everything urgent is not always important.
 - Break down big projects into manageable parts.
 - Strive to have one day a week meeting-free.
 - Pay attention to your time wasters and work to reduce or eliminate them.
 - Run efficient meetings that have a purpose.
15. Promote your achievements.
 - Everything you do can be taken for granted, so it is up to you to remind others of your accomplishments.
 - Market your achievements through regular reports, speak up in meetings and give presentations.
 - Develop measurable performance indicators such as staff retention rates, cost savings, time savings, benchmarks, efficiencies and so on.
 - Be known outside of the firm by building a network, writing a blog, being on a board or presenting.

Gifts Firm Administrators Bring (Attributes)

- ❖ Common Sense
- ❖ Human resource expertise; relationship building, trust and compassion. Emotional intelligence.
- ❖ Ability to recognize confidential issues and maintain confidentiality
- ❖ Ability to multi-task
- ❖ Flexibility throughout the day – ability to change and wear many hats
- ❖ A team player
- ❖ Stable/accurate (keep emotions in check)
- ❖ Self-starter – do what needs to be done without being told
- ❖ Project management skills
- ❖ Willingness to do whatever it takes for the good of the firm
- ❖ Self-confident
- ❖ Brave enough to ask the tough questions (courageous)
- ❖ Able to hold others accountable
- ❖ Knowing when to lead and when to follow
- ❖ Sales skills (sell decisions, policies, the firm, etc.) - persuasive
- ❖ Professional nag
- ❖ Organizational skills (not everyone has this)
- ❖ Uplifting/inspiring/positive in the face of difficulty
- ❖ Can be counted on to follow-through
- ❖ Enthusiastic
- ❖ Shows gratitude
- ❖ Ability to see how to improve efficiencies.

How Firm Administrators Bring Value

- ❖ Management skills – many partners lack the desire or skills needed to manage effectively. This relieves partners from managing the day-to-day operations which SAVES partner time. Partners have more time to do what they love and what will generate income.
- ❖ Ability to focus on people with understanding, compassion and trust (increasing retention and job satisfaction).
- ❖ Being a mediator between to people in order to improve communication, teamwork and efficiencies.
- ❖ Ability to support the partners while being the representative voice for the staff; resulting in better decisions.
- ❖ Save money: monitor the budget, watch expenses, obtain bids, negotiate costs and make sure that the firm gets the best value for the money. This drops directly to the bottom-line.
- ❖ Look for ways to improve efficiencies: saves time, reduces staff, increases job satisfaction, increases profitability.
- ❖ Keep the firm focused on firm goals and strategies which will ultimately provide growth and profits.
- ❖ Focus on one client – the Firm! Ensure that the firm has what it needs to run effectively, efficiently and profitably.
- ❖ Ability to see the big picture.
- ❖ Anticipate a problem and solve it before anyone knows it existed. Resolve issues and report back to the partner rather than seeking advice on how to solve the issue. Proactive problem solving will save time and money.
- ❖ Having the courage to say no and strive to make the best decision for the firm. The partners need us to be strong and not be a “yes person”.
- ❖ An ambassador who represents the firm well; will impact retention of both clients and staff.
- ❖ Ensure that policies and procedures are carried out fairly by everyone.
- ❖ Ability to see things from both the partners and employees view point.
- ❖ A sounding board for partners; provide strong and honest feedback. Be encouraging and nurturing, especially in the face of difficulty.
- ❖ Deal with the immediate issues but not losing sight of long-term priorities.
- ❖ Communicate information effective firm; anticipate questions or concerns.
- ❖ An in-house expert on how the firm works.
- ❖ Be an agent of change; work the firm through turnaround situations, be decisive and an effective communicator.